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Joint Economic Committee — Minority

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:30 am
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**Congressman Stark Calls on High Tech Community
to Provide Health Insurance for All Its Workers**

WASHINGTON -- At a hearing before the Joint Economic Committee today, Congressman Pete Stark called on a group of CEOs from the high tech industry to commit themselves to providing health insurance to all workers associated with the industry.

Congressman Stark noted that American taxpayers provided the initial venture capital needed to develop the computer and the Internet because all the original basic research took place in government-funded national labs and university research programs. In reminding the CEOs of the critical role which the government played in developing the technologies upon which this industry is founded, Mr. Stark said, "don't worry, I am not planning to ask the high tech industry to repay the government for its initial investment in developing the computer and the Internet – although it would be a sure way to finance comprehensive health insurance with a serious prescription drug component for every American."

Instead, Congressman Stark said, "As a tangible product of these hearings, I call on the high tech industry to commit themselves today to insuring that all people associated with the industry – full-time, part-time and temporary workers, as well as workers of firms doing any business with the high tech industry – receive some form of employer-provided health insurance."

Congressman Stark commented, "If your industry can't 'afford' to provide all its workers with basic needs, such as health care and retirement plans, how can we expect other industries to do so?"

In acknowledging the industry's accomplishments, Mr. Stark commented, "The industry has achieved much over the last decade, and I certainly wish for its continued success. Just think what we can achieve if the creative energy which has gone into making this industry so successful is also put to work in addressing the economic and social challenges still facing the nation."